

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF CABIN JOHN AND BEYOND JANUARY 2025 | VOLUME 59 | ISSUE 01

2025 TRIVIA NIGHT SATURDAY, JAN 25, 6:30PM

by Scott Lewis

Register here:
https://my.cheddarup.com/c/the-2025-annual-trivia-night/

What was the first country to give women the right to vote? How many colors will you find in a regular bag of M&Ms? What is the name of Jordan's capital city? If you know the answers to these questions, then the CJCA Trivia Night is for you! Our 2025 Trivia Night will be held on **Saturday, January 25 at the Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center starting at 6:30pm (sharp)**. As with previous years, players can count on roughly two and a half hours of challenging trivia, a grand prize for the winning team and bragging rights for the entire year.

We will have a cash / Venmo bar for beer and wine (and - new this year - you can pre-order drink tickets). Soft drinks and light snacks will be provided. Teams are encouraged to bring their own picnic if they want to dine. Or consider catering from one of our Holiday Party Raffle Sponsors - Sal's, The Wild Tomato, Sushi N You, the Glen Echo Inn and Kanpai Sushi.

See TRIVIA on pg. 3

LEVEL FITNESS LOT DEVELOPERS MEET WITH CJ COMMUNITY

by Susan Shipp

A standing-room-only crowd of close to 100 people gathered at Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center on December 12, 2024, for a presentation by the potential developers of 7687 MacArthur Boulevard, which is at the corner of 77th Street and MacArthur Boulevard and is currently occupied by Level Fitness.

The potential developers are Bethesda-based Broad Branch Partners, headed by Shane Crowley and Jason Weinstein. Both spoke at the meeting. Also present was their lawyer, Matthew Gordon of Selzer Gurvitch, and their civil engineer. The property owner, former Cabin John resident Jim Wilner, was represented at the meeting by CJ resident James Cahill, who specializes in landlord representation services and investment sales brokerage.

The developers began by describing other projects they have completed in the area, including 6970 West Avenue, Bethesda, where they built three new luxury 4-bedroom, 4-and-a-half bath elevator "Smart Home" townhouse condos that they are selling for $2.8 million each. Another property mentioned was 4702 West Virginia Avenue in Bethesda, where they recently received site plan approval to build a 125,000 square foot 11-story highrise that will include 53 condominiums, 6 townhouses and a 100-space parking garage.

The discussion shifted to their plans for 7687 MacArthur Blvd., a 0.42-acre parcel (21,000 square feet) that currently has three buildings totaling some 6,200 square feet of space and 16 parking spaces. The current selling price is $3.15 million ($509 per square foot). At the time of the meeting, the developer's plan was to build 11 luxury townhomes, four in one building facing MacArthur Blvd. and seven in a second building facing 77th Street.

Generally, each unit would be four stories, 44 feet in

See LEVEL on pg. 4

NEW TO CABIN JOHN? EMAIL US TO RECEIVE A WELCOME KIT:

cjcapresidents@gmail.com

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Neighborly News

by Heidi Lewis

OnCue Theatre's December 2024 production of the musical "Alice by Heart" featured serveral local young people including Whitman 10th graders **Nyla Gibbons**, **Cassidy Wolf**, and **Della McCahill**. The non-profit OnCue Theatre Corp. was started in 2020 by Whitman grad Molly Herson to provide 2nd - 12th grade students with high-quality, innovative theatre arts education and training, led by experienced theatre professionals and dedicated teaching artists. Auditions for "The Lightning Thief == The Percy Jackson Muscial" are at the end of Jan. More info at www.oncuetheatre.com



[L to R] Nyla Gibbons, Della McCahill, Cassidy Wolf

Send your news -- births, events, milestones, trips, new neighbors, etc. to cjcapresidents@gmail.com





CLARA BARTON CENTER FOR CHILDREN CELEBRATES 50 FABULOUS YEARS!

by Deb Duffy

Calling all Clara Barton Center for Children (CBCC) Alumni and Families! CBCC is celebrating its 50th Anniversary with you! Please mark your calendars now.

WHO: CBCC current and alumni families (***must be 21+)
WHAT: Anniversary party featuring food, drinks, silent auction, 50/50 raffle, and so much more!
WHERE: Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center
WHEN: Saturday, March 29, 7-10pm

Spread the word to other CBCC families and alumni, and stay tuned for more information, including how to buy tickets to the event of the year! Follow the event on Facebook for the most up-to-date information. Just search "Celebrating 50 Fabulous Years!" If you would like to donate something to the silent auction, please reach out to CBCC Board President **Jen Bernat (jenbernat@gmail.com).**

TRIVIA *Continued from pg. 1*

The Trivia Night does sell out so make sure you register. Form your team of up to eight players, come up with a team name and register at the CheddarUp link above. The cost is $10 a player or $70 for a team of eight players. On the registration site, you can either purchase a table of up to eight players or buy up to four individual seats. We will partner those buying individual seats. And if you buy a table, don't feel you need to fill all eight seats, but every additional person does help with trivia!

Non-players are welcome but do need to buy a $5 spectators ticket to help offset the cost of the food and drink available.

Proceeds from the night will support the community activities and projects of the Cabin John Citizens Association, which is hosting the evening. **Please note that this is an adults-only event – participants must be 21 years old or older.**

CJCA News

by Scott and Heidi Lewis

The January Cabin John Citizens Association (CJCA) meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 7:30 p.m**. at the Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center (CBNRC) and virtually via meet.google.com/kyk-dcmq-ybt.

The primary topic of this meeting is "**A Citizen's Guide to Planning and Zoning**". We will convene a panel discussion to discuss the role of zoning in residential development, key participants, tools and documents, the process and appeals, citizen engagement, and challenges and controversies. We will also review November's meeting minutes and discuss upcoming CJCA events including the Trivia Night and the House Tour.

SAVE THE DATE: CABIN JOHN HOUSE TOUR! SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1 - 5 PM

Mark your calendars and plan to attend and/or help volunteer as a house monitor that day. Stay tuned for more details next month!



THE WORLD CUP OF CABIN JOHN

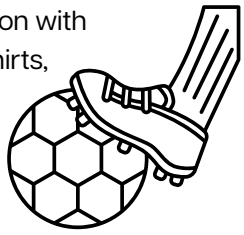
by Farhad Shirzad and Scott Lewis

For almost two decades, a diverse group of soccer (football) players has gathered at the field behind the Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center. The team originally started in Virginia and ended up in Cabin John because of the availability of the field and the accessibility of Cabin John. This avid group of players, aged from 8 to 80, meets Sunday mornings for what is, by all accounts, a friendly match. Notable players have included NCAA soccer players, Cabin John residents Farhad Shirzad, Carlo La Porta, Jeff Berger, and past CJCA President, Burr Gray.

The group formed forty-eight years ago as sort of a round robin sports pick-up for busy parents needing a bit of fun. At that time, it included Ultimate Frisbee, soccer and other sports, but eventually settled on soccer after several years. The group originally rotated fields but had a special fondness for our very own Cabin John given field conditions and availability. And it is Cabin John afterall.

Playing without referees, the players call their own fouls, handballs, and other infractions and there's rarely any dispute. But of course every once in a while, particularly in the summer when it is hot, tempers get short. Skill levels vary but enthusiasm is always high. Many of the players have observed that it is one of the best parts of their week. It wouldn't be a Sunday without a field of soccer players and the orange cones marking the field and goals.

Interested in playing? Just stop by one Sunday morning, cleats optional. While the tradition with pick-up soccer games is dark and light shirts, this group has moved to light and red, so be sure to pick a color. See you next Sunday!



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LEVEL *Continued from pg. 1*

in height with a flat roof and a two-car garage on the ground floor. There would be a 20-foot wide private alley to allow cars to enter and exit their garages, but no off-street parking for the owners or their visitors. The setback from 77th Street would include a five-foot buffer from the curb and a six-foot wide sidewalk. The street width would remain 50 feet wide. The asking price per unit is anticipated to be between $1.5 million and $2 million.

Please see at the end of this article an update provided by the developers 6 days after the community meeting.

The developers have not yet bought the property and it seems that any sale would be contingent on the successful map amendment to change the zoning of the property. Currently, 75% of the property is zoned C-1 (according to the real estate listing) or CRT (according to the developers). The C-1 and CRT designations allow for a range of business uses.

The other 25% of the property, roughly 5,000 to 6,000 square feet is zoned R-90, which is typically used for single-family detached homes and requires a 30-foot setback from the street and a minimum rear setback of 25 feet with lots recorded between 1941 and 1954 allowed to have a rear set back of 20 feet. The building height restriction for R-90 is 35 feet to roof peak or 30 foot to mean height between eaves and ridge of gable, hip, mansard or gambrel roof. A number of residents raised concerns about the planned building height, but the developers did not express any flexibility on that issue.

The developers are proposing to rezone the whole property to CRN–commercial/residential neighborhood. The developers pointed out that this rezoning would put limits on the kinds of commercial enterprises that could be located on the land, while making it suitable for their townhouse development.

However, the CRN rezoning would also raise the allowable density of the 25% of the property that is currently zoned R-90. The developers made it clear that their development plan does not work without the R-90 portion of the property rezoned to CRN.

At different times during the meeting, the developers and Jim Cahill suggested that if the property is not rezoned and the development does not move forward, the community could find the property bought by an implied undesirable business, citing as examples a dry cleaner, an auto body shop, an overnight methadone clinic or "a daycare with 200 cars entering and exiting the property every day."

One resident let the developers know that this property is one of only a handful of commercial properties in Cabin John. Generally, the community appreciates its local retailers and the businesses that have operated 7687 MacArthur Blvd. have been good neighbors. Past enterprises have included a hair salon, an antiques shop, a canoe and kayak retailer, and the Wild Bird Center. For the past 20 years, Level Fitness has leased the space.

The developers outlined a timeline for rezoning:

- Submission of Local Map Amendment application to the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC): January 2025
- Review of Local Map Amendment Application by M-NCPPC and the county planning board: 1st Quarter 2025
- Review of Local Map Amendment Application by Office of Zone and Hearing Examiner: Spring 2025
- Review of Local Map Amendment Application by County Council: Summer 2025
- Additional Pre-Submission Community Meeting for Preliminary Plan/Site Plan: Summer 2025
- Planning Board Review of Preliminary Plan/Site Plan Applications: Late 2025-Early 2026

There was no additional discussion on the process so it is not clear if this represents all the steps in the county's rezoning process. Nor were details provided about when the developers would actually purchase the lot.

While the rezoning requirements do not include soil studies, stormwater management plans or parking and traffic impacts, residents raised those concerns as part of the meeting. The plan clearly reduces the green footprint of the property which could have drainage consequences. The developer explained that their plan would incorporate significant stormwater management into the landscaping on a strip of land on the east side of the property. It sounds as if drainage spouts from the buildings would be buried underneath the alleyway and flow to this rainscape-landscape.

The developers acknowledged that they are

Continued next page

LEVEL *Continued from pg. 4*

aware that the open gully along MacArthur Blvd. is where stormwater runoff flows from 77th Street. Residents pointed out that this gully currently fills and occasionally floods over, sending water down into the MacArthur Park townhome development across MacArthur Blvd. The developers acknowledged that they have not driven down into the MacArthur Park development and seemed unaware that it consists of 45 townhomes on 10.5 acres, a much more bucolic townhouse development in keeping with the Cabin John community.

Regarding the traffic impact, the developer said the county traffic studies use standard traffic models for differing property types and would indicate a lower traffic impact than possible commercial applications of the property. However, the number of housing units on 77th Street would almost double, from 12 homes currently to 23 dwellings. Residents also raised concerns regarding trash collection management, parking and street navigation. Twice the crowd applauded residents who spoke about this proposed development not being consistent with the neighborhood and the Cabin John community at large.

UPDATE: On December 18, 2024, attorney Matthew Gordon representing Broad Branch Partners emailed CJCA: "*I will be in touch with more detail in January, but I wanted to provide a quick update. My client heard the feedback and is now going back to the drawing board to develop a plan with less density and building height and will pursue development as permitted by the current zoning for the property (i.e., rezoning is no longer being pursued).*"

QUARTERMASTERS NEEDED!

Volunteer opportunity at Lock House 10

by Shelly McKenzie

We are looking for a few more quartermasters to help with the Canal Quarters program at our local lock house. The position would entail occasional visits to the house (1-4 monthly) for the purpose of changing the door code and taking inventory.

Guests at the house are typically conscientious and leave the place as they found it, so a visit shouldn't take longer than 45 minutes. One orientation visit to the house would be all the training necessary. Interested volunteers can contact **Arden Shaer of the C&O Canal Trust at 240-202-2625 ext. 108, or shaer@canaltrust.org.**

NEW CJ DIRECTORY THIS YEAR

by Marcy Harrison

CJCA will publish an updated Neighborhood Telephone Directory this fall. Between now and May we will ask residents to **submit updated or new contact information** for each household. There will be multiple ways to do this, via paper and online submission methods. You can also specify what information you want published in the online version of the directory. Paper and online Cheddar Up instructions will be included in the 2025 dues letter mailing soon.

Alternatively, you can submit contact information at any time on the form on CJCA's website: www.cabinjohn.org)/Get Connected/CJ Directory.

Local Talent: We will again include a section in the directory where neighbors can share the services they provide, e.g. artists, health and wellness services, musicians, notary public.. **To be included in the Local Talent list** (the listing is free) submit a short description of your talent along with your name, title, phone and email address to CJDirectory2020@gmail.com.

Questions? Contact **Marcy Harrison at CJDirectory2020@email.com.**

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Our Town

by Annemarie Economou Gormley

THE BEAUTY OF CABIN JOHN AND BERNIE

How this widow from the Lake Norman area of North Carolina met, fell in love with, and married a widower in Cabin John, is truly a story worth telling, but I will save that for another day. The topic of this month's column is how warm and hospitable Cabin John has been to me since my arrival in 2024.

The tree-lined streets, the walking trails, and the abundant wildlife lure me into the sunshine everyday, and the smiling faces and friendly dogs greet me along the way. Cabin John's idyllic, wholesome atmosphere reminds me of a Norman Rockwell painting, and if I could paint a scene, I would start at the Cabin John Post Office. Since it is within walking distance of my new home, I often pop in there to mail my letters and packages, and then I either quietly observe the patrons or participate in lively conversations with them.

Recently, postal worker Bernie Saal, with his green toboggan hat perched on his head, told me the story of a feral cat he and his wife, Laura, befriended near their home. When the cat arrived at their front door, Laura started feeding it. Bernie thought it might be a good idea to trap the cat and bring him inside their house, so he approached the Montgomery County Cat Coalition to borrow a trap, which the organization gladly loaned.

Unfortunately, Bernie didn't totally understand how the trap worked, so when he picked up the trap, the cat was able to scratch his hands. The next day he landed in the hospital with swollen hands. It was there that he had to fill out a form about the cat. He fibbed on the form saying the cat that bit him belonged to him. After all, since Laura and Bernie were feeding the cat, they considered him to be their pet. The form triggered a visit from Montgomery County Animal Services.

"What's going on with your cat?" asked the officer.

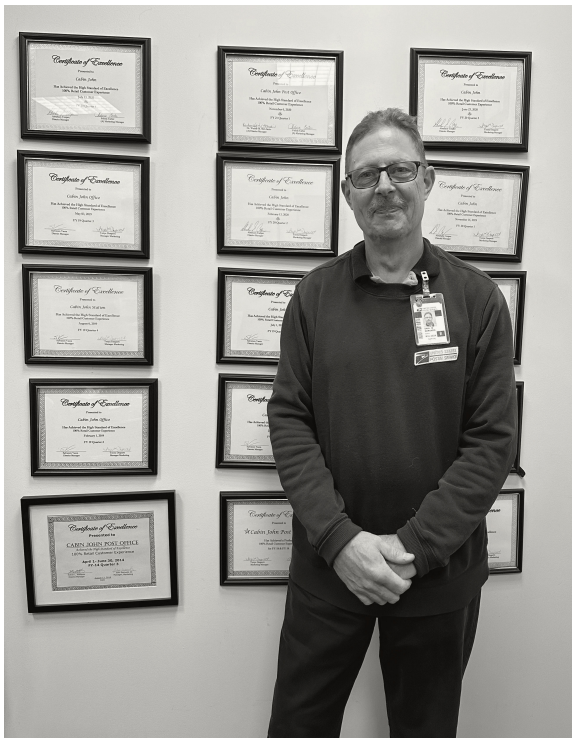
"It's not really my cat," explained Bernie.

"Well, we need to quarantine the cat for a week," was the response.



Joshie the cat

The cat was successfully trapped and quarantined at the shelter while Bernie received antibiotics at the hospital for his infection. After his hands healed, Bernie called the shelter.



Bernie Saal with many of the awards our CJ Post Office professionals have earned for outstanding customer service.

"What's going on with the cat you trapped in my yard?" asked Bernie.

"Well, it bit someone, so it is being quarantined for a week."

"Yeah, it bit me, but please don't kill the cat," begged Bernie. "It is my pet."

"Did you know the cat is chipped?"

"No."

"You want to know who owns it?"

"Yes!"

"The Montgomery County Cat Coalition," answered the employee.

Obviously, the cat had participated in their TNR program. Bernie continued telling his story, "So, I brought the cat trap back to the group and asked them to retrieve the cat from the shelter when the quarantine period was over, and return it to my yard. And they did. So now the cat is part of our family. He is our pet. We bought an outdoor cat house for him. He doesn't come inside, but he is our pet."

Some patrons claim they drop by the post office just to listen to the "Bernie Show." Maybe Bernie's next career can be as a stand-up comedian. I asked him how his post office career began, and he told me about a dream he had had

Continued next page

BERNIE *continued from pg. 7*

that he worked for the post office and loved it. That dream propelled him to take the postal assessment test. He held several other postal positions before landing in Cabin John, which has been his absolute favorite location.

For nearly the last two decades, Bernie has been working two jobs in the service industry. He loves providing quality service to people.

It is quite common for people to ask Bernie, "Don't I know you from somewhere?" or "Where have I seen you before?"

"In the daytime I am here at the Cabin John Post Office, but at nighttime, I work at some of the most interesting locations. This weekend I will be at The National Building Museum and then I'll be working at the 47th Annual Kennedy Center Honors. Obviously, not many people know about this double life I have."

With a degree in Food and Beverage Management from Montgomery College and extensive experience in the catering business, Bernie is well respected throughout the catering community. Bernie started getting jobs with catering companies in the 1970s. He has worked in the catering industry over the last six decades in positions from banquet waiter to kitchen manager.

It all started when Bernie got a flat tire in front of the Bethesda Country Club and when he walked in a door seeking assistance with his car, the kitchen chef gave him an apron and told him to get to work. Bernie loved it. And he fell in love while working in the industry.

"I was working at Indian Springs Country Club, and I noticed Laura working with the banquet manager and asked if she could help me." They worked together and eventually married. I've been married for nearly twenty years," explained Bernie.

Each day at the post office affords Bernie with opportunities to be kind to others. A customer found a credit card still in the credit card reader, and handed it to Bernie. He ascertained the person's address and hand-delivered the card. The recipient was exceedingly grateful and wanted to return his kindness, but as Bernie says, "Just pass along the niceness to others."

"There are times people might think I am being abrasive, but I am just trying to look out for the business. Sometimes I am just trying to keep the line moving. Not many people know that there are cameras everywhere and people judging us."

As Bernie shared his experiences with me, he invited me to take a quick walk on his lunch break. Across the street we went to visit longtime resident Uva Cable. He likes to pick up her outgoing mail and drop off deliveries every day.

"Bernie is a kind, accommodating addition to the neighborhood," smiled Uva, when I accompanied him to her home. Having lived here for 85 years, I think Uva knows what she is talking about.

Bernie likes to reminisce about the dream he had two decades ago that showed him how working for the post office would be a dream come true.

"For me, the dream has come true." Bernie loves that he can be busy both day and night helping others and bringing smiles to their faces.

Montgomery County Cat Coalition (MC C³) offers essential resources to community cat caretakers, including Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) programs, food banks, and weather-resistant cat shelters to ensure that unowned cats receive humane care while reducing overpopulation. MC C³ relies on the generosity of donors and accepts monetary gifts, cat food, traps, and supplies. Visit: www.MCC3.org



REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY IN CABIN JOHN

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Poems For Passersby

Presented by Meredith Griggs



Out on a winter morning walk, Cabin Johners Elizabeth Fox and Perry Rosensweig, along with Woody, pause at Poems for Passersby on upper 78th Street.

Why the saying is "As the crow flies"

A.E. Stallings

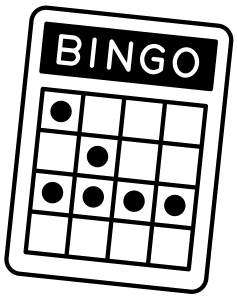
Because the buzzard skirts around
The subject, tactful and profound,
Because there is no one can follow
The insect zigzag of the swallow
Among the wings of dusk, because
The hawk is so precipitous,
Because the owl makes no noise
Robbing the rabbit of her voice,
Because the doves would rather be
Safe on the ground, the bourgeoisie,
Grey-suited, plump and gossiping,
And mockingbirds would rather sing
Upon a twig a half a dozen
Stolen tunes, but Raven's cousin
Alone will fly both straight and stark
His course, one feather with the dark.

Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center

Cabin John Family Bingo Night

February 28 from 7-9 pm

Clara Barton Neighborhood Recreation Center



State Delegate Marc Korman and **State Senator Sara Love** will once again be calling only the best numbers. Pizza and drinks for sale at very cheap prices and only $5 per card. A fun, festive, inexpensive evening for all! Buy more than one card to improve your odds.

We can always use student volunteers to assist for SSL credit, so please let Burr Gray (burrgray@aol.com) know if your daughter or son is interested in helping with the evening. Net proceeds go to support the rec center.

Organized by Friends of the Clara Barton Community Center (FCBCC).

FCBCC is looking for additional board members to help with events and support the center. Please contact Burr Gray (burrgray@aol.com) if you are interested in this worthy cause.

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DID YOU KNOW?

The age and condition of your roof can affect your insurance premiums. A newer, well-maintained roof can lower your premiums because it is less likely to suffer damage. On the other hand, an old or damaged roof can increase your premiums or even make it difficult to get coverage.

Regular inspections and maintenance are key to keeping your roof in top shape and your insurance costs down. Roof maintenance includes yearly inspections, cleaning of gutters, repairing damage promptly, and proper attic insulation to prevent ice dams and reduce energy costs.

"Living in Cabin John for over 30 years I'm invested in the success of selling homes here."

Rachelle Cherol
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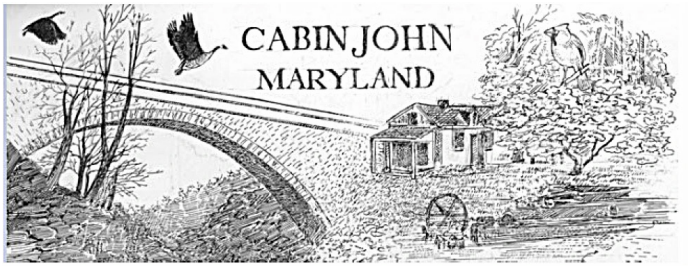
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The Village News is a monthly newsletter published since 1967 by the Cabin John Citizens Association. Ten issues are published a year and mailed free to every household in Cabin John. Others may subscribe for $12 per year. Send news, articles, and letters to: VNeditorial@gmail.com. Send advertising inquiries and subscription requests to: VNbusinessmanager@gmail.com. Reach CJCA leadership at cjcapresidents@gmail.com. You can contact *The Village News* by mail at Village News, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818.

Volunteers who make *The Village News* possible:
Shelly McKenzie, editor; **Heidi Lewis**, (interim) layout designer; and **Marcy Harrison**, business manager.

Regular contributors: Sarah Craven, Annemarie Economou Gormley, Burr Gray, Meredith Griggs, Heidi Lewis, Scott Lewis Charlotte Troup-Leighton, and Susan Shipp. Illustrations by Trudy Nicholson.

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE:
5 pm, January 25, 2025
CJCA, P.O. Box 31, Cabin John, MD 20818

To receive updates throughout the month, subscribe to the **official CJCA listserv:**
email "subscribe" to cjca-official-news+subscribe@googlegroups.com

Classified Ads

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Community Calendar

JANUARY	*All events at Clara Barton Neighborhood Rec Center unless otherwise noted*
22	CJCA Meeting, 7:30 pm
25	TRIVIA NIGHT, 6:30 pm
FEBRUARY	
2	Blood Drive, 10:00 am
26	CJCA Meeting, 7:30 pm
28	Family Bingo Night, 7:00 pm

SAVE THE DATE

April 6 - Spring Egg Hunt
May 3 - House Tour